



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Patent and Trademark Office

Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
09/185,057	11/02/98	LIEN	C IDT-1548

E ERIC HOFFMAN
BEVER & HOFFMAN
2099 GATEWAY PLACE SUITE 320
SAN JOSE CA 95110-1017

MM42/0303

EXAMINER

HO, H

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2818

DATE MAILED: 03/03/00

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/185,057

Applicant(s)
Lien et al.

Examiner
H. Ho

Group Art Unit
2818



☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 1/31/00

☒ This action is **FINAL**.

☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 35 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Disposition of Claim

☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the applicat

Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration

☒ Claim(s) 1-19 and 21-32 is/are allowed.

☒ Claim(s) 20 is/are rejected.

☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

☐ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.

☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.

☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

☐ All ☐ Some* ☒ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been

☐ received.

☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____.

☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

☐ Notice of References Cited, PTO-892

☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____

☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413

☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948

☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

— SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES —

Art Unit: 2818

Response to Amendment

1. This office action is in response to Amendment A filed on 1/31/00.
2. Claims 1-32 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person will be entitled to a patent unless --

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Jiang US Pat. No. 5,351,208 (IDS).

Figure 2 of Jiang is directed to a content addressable memory (CAM) cell having a match line (214) that carries a signal (connection between 210 and 211) to indicate whether a match or a no-match condition exists within the CAM cell (col. 2, lines 54-60), the match line having a signal swing equal to one transistor threshold voltage (213 and col. 2, lines 58-60).

The limitation "the match line having a signal swing equal to one transistor threshold voltage" is seen to be an inherent teaching of the transistor. When the transistor is turned on the voltage will drop across its drain and source. This voltage is called a transistor threshold voltage. For example, Jiang, starting column 2, lines 58-60, discloses that "if a memory cell has data that do not match, a match transistor 213 turns on and discharges match line 214," it means that the match line 214 has a signal swing equal to one transistor threshold voltage of the match transistor

Art Unit: 2818

213 from its source to drain since a source of the match transistor 213 connected to Vss (ground), its drain connected to the match line 214, and its gate is controlled and turned on by the transistor 211 as shown in Figure 2 of Jiang (see col. 2, lines 38-60).

5. Applicants' arguments have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue that "Jiang does not teach or suggest that the signal swing on match line 214 is equal to 'one transistor threshold voltage'." The Examiner disagrees with this statement, because when the transistor is turned on the voltage will drop across its drain and source. This voltage is called a transistor threshold voltage. Figure 2 and column 2, lines 58-60 of Jiang disclose for this limitation. Also see more arguments about this teaching in the 35 U.S.C. 102(b) rejections above. Feature of an invention not found in the claims can be given no patentable weight in distinguishing the claimed invention over the prior art.

6. Claims 1-19 and 21-32 are allowed.

7. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

8. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

Art Unit: 2818

however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.


9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to whose telephone number is (703) 308-4839. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. - Thur. from 7:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Nelms, can be reached on (703) 308-4910. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 308-7722. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.



H. Ho

February 19, 2000



David Nelms
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 2800